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Keys to Buymanship: Durable Press

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—keys to buymanship—

DURABLE PRESS

Cooperative Extension Service

South Dakota State University

United State Department of Agriculture

durable press

By Elizabeth K. Easton, extension clothing specialist

Durable or "permanent press" is a term added to the vocabulary in the last few years. It is not to be confused with "drip-dry" or "wash-and-wear" which also have been time-saving developments for the care of family clothing. This fact sheet has been prepared to help you, the consumer, become better informed about buying and caring for durable press garments and fabrics.

Durable press is the result of a chemical applied to fabric before it is made into garments. It is baked or pressed (heat set) after the garment is sewn. This finish gives permanent shaping to garments enabling them to be smooth and wrinkle-free during wear without touch-up ironing. Household linens such as sheets, pillow cases, and tablecloths also are made from permanent press fabrics.

Fabrics which are given a permanent press finish generally are made from a blend of fibers: cotton and polyester, cotton and rayon, rayon and polyester or cotton and acrylic. The polyester or acrylic fibers add strength to the fabric and the cotton or rayon provide comfort. Most satisfactory blends are 65/35, 50/50, or 35/65%. The first number in each case represents the synthetic fiber. The lighter weight fabrics are more satisfactory if the percentage of synthetic fiber is 50% or more.

Durable press does not always go by the same name. The trade mark is the property of individual manufacturers. The following refers in general to the *type of finish*. You will find many trade names as you shop. Some of them are:

Vanopress	Perma Ironed
Dan-Press	Super Crease
Burmi-Press	Pre-set (for home sewing)
Mello-Press	Penn Prest
Koratron	Stay Prest
Cone-prest	Ever-Prest
Mirablend	Perma-Press

Durable press fabrics designed for home sewing differ from those seen in ready-to-wear fashions. Purchased garments have been subjected to high pressure "baking" after they are made to permanently set all

creases. This treatment cannot be duplicated at home. Permanent press yardage sold for home sewing can be creased during sewing or later, although creases may not be as sharp or as permanent as those in factory-made garments.

Shopping Tips

Read the label for fiber content percentages and care requirements. Remember, the higher the percentage of synthetic fiber, the more wrinkle-free, especially in light-weight fabrics. Heavy fabrics used in slacks or jeans will remain permanently ironed even if the amount of synthetic fiber is less than half.

Check fabric color or printing for evenness and absence of streaks or mottled effects.

Check for accuracy of print of design with grain-line. If crosswise grain is not at right angles to the sel- vage the finished appearance will be unsatisfactory.

Check construction. Make sure pockets, seams, plackets, etc., lie flat and smooth. Be sure that no unwanted creases have been permanently set.

Avoid garments with decorative top stitching which may pucker.

Check fit. Remember, no shrinkage will occur and alterations are difficult.

Look for special finishes, such as water repellent or spot and stain repellent finishes.

Avoid buying garments or fabrics that have a noticeable odor. This may not wash out.

Buy from a reputable store.

Problems Related to Wear

Permanent press fabrics tend to hold greasy stains. Garments cannot be let out without original creases showing.

Wear life of garment is shortened because of chemicals used to give permanent press finish.

Synthetic fibers in blends tend to "pill."

White garments may yellow or gray after repeated washings.

Permanent press fabrics generate static electricity.

Tumble drying is required for good appearance of light-weight fabrics.

Seams may pucker.

Dark colors may "frost" at creases and other areas of extreme wear.

Care

1. **Wash frequently.** Pre-treat greasy stains and collars and cuffs with undiluted liquid detergent or a paste made from granular laundry detergent dissolved in hot water. (Liquid shampoo also works well.) If stains are embedded in the fabrics allow the detergent to remain in the fabric overnight.
2. **Sort clothes for color.**
3. **Wash similar types** of fabric together.
4. **Turn garments wrong side out** to reduce wear on creases, ("frost" effect).
5. **Wash small loads.**
6. **Use warm or cool water** to reduce wrinkling. If necessary to use hot water for heavily soiled garments, be sure to use cool water rinse.
7. **Avoid chlorine bleaches.**
8. **Wash for short periods**, no longer than five minutes. Agitate slowly. Use plenty of detergent.
9. **Rinse in cool water.** A fabric softener added to the rinse water will reduce static electricity.
10. **Tumble dry** for best results. Use medium heat and remove from dryer while slightly damp or at least as soon as the dryer stops.
11. **For line drying** place the garments so they hang straight or put them on hangers.
12. **Use a steam iron** at a low setting if touch-up ironing is necessary.

Tips for Home Sewing

Select a simple pattern without pleats, elaborate stitching, seams, or detail.

Shrink zipper tapes by soaking in hot water, then ease the zipper when setting it into garment.

Be sure all trim and sewing notions are pre-shrunk.

Sew with mercerized cotton thread, number 50 or 60. Dual duty and silicone treated cotton threads also are recommended.

Use fine, sharp needles for both hand and machine sewing.

Sew approximately 10 machine stitches per inch.

Sew with a relaxed upper and lower tension and light pressure.

Avoid areas of fullness to be eased in, such as the cap of a sleeve.

Understitch all facings and other edges to achieve a sharp appearance.

Avoid top stitching.

Press as you sew. Do final pressing with a steam iron.

Slightly bias seams are less apt to pucker.

If pucker persists place a strip of tissue paper or newsprint between fabric and feed dogs.

Use regular throatplate with small round needle hole.

Sew evenly and slowly. Do not pull or crowd fabric.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION—FS 473 Fiber Facts

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